

Message Text

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20

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAJ-01 OMB-01 /055 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9364

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL SONGKHLA

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 20047

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, TH

SUBJ: NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY APPROVES FIRST READING OF
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ON APPOINTMENT OF SENATORS

REF: BANGKOK 19775

1. THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (NLA) APPROVED DECEMBER
26 BY A VOTE OF 182 TO 12 THE FIRST READING OF A CONSTITUTIONAL
AMENDMENT WHICH SOMPHON THEPSITTHA PROPOSED. THE AMENDMENT
WOULD HAVE THE PRIME MINISTER, RATHER THAN THE CHAIRMAN OF
THE PRIVY COUNCIL, COUNTERSIGN THE KING'S ORDER APPOINTING
MEMBERS OF THE UPPER HOUSE.

2. THE NLA THEN ACCEPTED BY 110 TO 2 A MOTION OF YAI SAWITCHAT
TO APPOINT A FIVE MEMBER COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE PROPOSED
AMENDMENT AND RECOMMEND POSSIBLE CHANGES BEFORE THE NLA DEBATES
THE BILL AT ITS SECOND READING DECEMBER 27.

3. IF THE NLA PASSES THE AMENDMENT AT ITS SECOND AND THIRD
READINGS, AS NOW APPEARS LIKELY, IT WILL OVERCOME THE KING'S
OBJECTION TO THE WORDING IN THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION WHEREBY
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THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL, A ROYAL APPOINTEE, COUNTER-

SIGNS THE KING'S ORDER APPOINTING MEMBERS OF THE SENATE.
THIS IS THE ONLY INSTANCE IN WHICH THE CONSTITUTION PROVIDES
THAT A ROYALLY APPOINTED OFFICIAL COUNTERSIGN A ROYAL DECREE.
IN HIS REMARKS UPON PROMULGATING THE CONSTITUTION OCTOBER 7,
THE KING HAD NOTED THAT THIS PROVISION WAS INCONSISTENT WITH
DEMOCRATIC RULE.

4. THE CURRENT AMENDMENT, UNLIKE THE ONE THE NLA REJECTED
DECEMBER 19, WOULD NOT ABOLISH THE UPPER HOUSE. BEING LESS
CONTROVERSIAL, IT HAS THE SUPPORT OF THOSE NLA MEMBERS WHO
WANT TO ABIDE BY THE KING'S WISHES, BUT WITHOUT SUBSTANTIALLY
CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION.
KINTNER

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Message Attributes

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